



National Weather Service

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



January 1997

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons		Estimated Damage		Character of Storm
					Killed	Injured	Property	Crops	

CONNECTICUT, Northeast

CTZ002>004

Hartford - Tolland - Windham

24	1800EST	0	0	Freezing Rain
25	0600EST			

Light freezing rain created very treacherous driving conditions and caused numerous skidding accidents, including many multiple-car accidents. State police at the Tolland barracks reported 60-80 accidents, mostly minor, late Friday night, January 24th. Several bridges had to be closed in the Hartford area when more than a dozen cars collided. Several other highways also were closed in northern Connecticut due to icing conditions. A spotter in Windsor reported 1/4" to 1/3" of ice on trees during the early morning hours on January 25th.

MASSACHUSETTS, Central and East

MAZ020>022

Southern Bristol - Southern Plymouth - Barnstable

10	0500EST 1000EST	0	0	Strong Wind
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MAZ020>021

Southern Bristol - Southern Plymouth

10	0600EST 1000EST	0	0	Coastal Flood
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A combination of a new-moon high tide and southeast winds that became southwest and gusting to 40 to 55 mph resulted in a storm tidal surge which reached 2 to 4 feet in Buzzards Bay and Mount Hope Bay. Some peak wind gusts included: 55 mph at Pocasset; 47 mph on West Island, Fairhaven; and 44 mph at Fall River. Numerous roads, yards, and cellars were flooded in low-lying waterfront areas. All communities from Wareham to Fall River and Westport along the south coast reported flooding. The most affected areas were along the waterfronts of Marion, Mattapoisett, Fairhaven, and Dartmouth. In Marion, water was reported 4 feet above high tide. Some local residents said this was the highest coastal flooding they had seen outside of a hurricane. This was the worst flooding since Hurricane Bob in 1991. There is the possibility that a "gravity wave" (which results in rapid changes in wind and atmospheric pressure fields) may have played a part in this sudden and unexpected coastal flooding event. Several small streams that empty into Mount Hope Bay rose up 3 feet out of their banks. Flooding occurred in several Bristol County towns. The Taunton and Assonet Rivers overflowed onto a few streets in Berkley as reported by local police. In Somerset, a beach entrance and a bridge were closed. Overall, the flooding was considered minor with no structural damage or road washouts.

MAZ004>005

Northern Worcester - Western Middlesex

10	1630EST 1730EST	0	0	Snow Squall
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A sudden snow squall, accompanied by thunder, hit parts of northern Worcester County and the Merrimack Valley just as the sun was setting and deposited a quick one to two inches of snow. In Leominster, police closed a three-mile section of Route 2 for 45 minutes as the sudden snow accumulation made the highway extremely icy and resulted in dozens of accidents. In the greater Lowell area, the late afternoon commute quickly became a grid-lock due to dozens of skidding accidents as roads became very slippery. Cars were at a standstill due to spinning tires unable to grip the icy road surfaces. The traffic jams lasted for several hours.

MAZ013-016>024

Western Norfolk - Eastern Norfolk - Northern Bristol - Western Plymouth - Eastern Plymouth - Southern Bristol - Southern Plymouth - Barnstable - Dukes - Nantucket

11	0500EST 1300EST	0	0	Heavy Snow
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A developing low pressure system south of Long Island spread bands of heavy snow across southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod, and the Islands. Six to nine inches of snow fell from just south of Boston to northern Rhode Island and southeastward to Cape Cod. This was a quick-hitting storm with snow accumulation rates up to 2 inches per hour. Most of the snowfall occurred during a 6-hour period. Some snowfall amounts included: Cohasset, 9.5 inches; Norwell, 9 inches; Taunton, 8.6 inches; Hingham and Blue Hill in



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MASSACHUSETTS, Central and East

Milton, both 8.0 inches; North Quincy, Norwood, and Stoughton, 7 inches; Attleboro, 6.5 inches; West Dennis, 6.3 inches; and Yarmouth, Acushnet, and New Bedford, 6 inches. Numerous minor traffic accidents were reported. An 18-car pile-up forced police to close Route 3 in Braintree for about 20 minutes. In another chain reaction collision, another 18-car pile-up on Route 3 in Duxbury closed the highway for 45 minutes. A 10-car collision closed a section of Interstate 95 near Dedham at 7 AM.

MAZ016	Eastern Norfolk							
	16	1253EST			0	0		High Wind (G56)
	A peak gust to 65 mph from the south was recorded at the Blue Hill Observatory in Milton at an elevation of 670 feet above sea level.							
MAZ016	Eastern Norfolk							
	17	0924EST			0	0		High Wind (G52)
	The Blue Hill Observatory recorded a peak wind gust of 60 mph from the west-northwest							
MAZ005	Western Middlesex							
	17	1030EST			0	0		High Wind (G65)
	The Littleton Fire Department reported winds of 55 mph with a peak gust to 75 mph. Tree limbs were blown down and there were scattered power outages. The strong west winds accompanied the arrival of an Arctic airmass.							
MAZ007	Eastern Essex							
	17	1030EST			0	0	2K	Strong Wind
	Strong west-northwest winds blew several sections of siding from a house in Lynnfield							
MAZ024	Nantucket							
	17	2000EST			0	0		Heavy Snow Squalls
	18	0700EST						
	Six to eight inches of "ocean-effect" snow fell across Nantucket Island as west-southwest winds transported Arctic air across the relatively warmer ocean waters. Several inches of snow also fell on the nearby island of Martha's Vineyard							
MAZ016-022	Eastern Norfolk - Barnstable							
	28	0600EST 1030EST			0	0		High Wind (G54)
	Strong south winds were reported from the eastern part of the state. Sustained south winds of nearly 40 mph with a gust to 60 mph was reported at Blue Hill, just south of Boston, in Milton. A peak gust to 62 mph was reported at Eastham on Cape Cod Bay. Pocasset reported a peak gust to 51 mph.							
MAZ013>019	Western Norfolk - Southeast Middlesex - Suffolk - Eastern Norfolk - Northern Bristol - Western Plymouth - Eastern Plymouth							
	31	1900EST 2359EST			0	0		Freezing Drizzle
	Light freezing drizzle coated highways with a thin layer of glaze and caused dozens of crashes including a series of pile-ups on both sides of Route 495 in Franklin, which involved 40 cars. The crashes resulted in both Routes 495 and 140 being shut down for more than an hour after 8 PM. There also were numerous accidents in the Boston area and as far south as Pembroke and Duxbury, where there was a 15-car pile-up on Route 3. A 16-car pile-up was reported in Canton near the junction of Route 128 and Route 95. A 4-car pile-up was reported in Quincy. Only minor injuries resulted from the automobile crashes.							

NEW HAMPSHIRE, Southern

NHZ012	Hillsborough							
	10	1630EST 1700EST			0	0		Snow Squall
	A sudden snow squall, accompanied by thunder, hit the Merrimack Valley just as the sun was setting and deposited a quick one to two inches of snow. In the greater Nashua area, the late afternoon commute quickly became a grid-lock of stalled automobiles							



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NEW HAMPSHIRE, Southern

unable to move on icy streets. Nashua police reported more than 70 accidents. Traffic jams lasted for several hours.

NHZ011 **Cheshire**
28 **0000EST** **0** **0** **Heavy Snow**
0800EST

A total snowfall of 7.5 inches was reported from the town of Westmoreland and about 6 inches fell in Alstead before precipitation changed to sleet and freezing rain.

RHODE ISLAND

RIZ006>007 **Washington - Newport**
10 **0500EST** **0** **0** **Strong Wind**
1000EST

RIZ005>007 **Bristol - Washington - Newport**
10 **0600EST** **0** **0** **Coastal Flood**
1000EST

A combination of a new-moon high tide and southeast winds that became southwest and gusted to 40 to 50 mph resulted in a storm tidal surge which reached 2 to 4 feet on Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays. There is the possibility that a "gravity wave" (which results in rapid changes in wind and atmospheric pressure fields) may have played a part in this sudden and unexpected flooding event. In Newport, where high tide occurred at 8:21 AM, two and one-half feet of water was reported on streets and there was basement flooding. In Barrington, the Palmer River flooded some streets, and in Providence a park was reported flooded. Also, in Providence, the tide came within a foot of topping the hurricane barrier. In Tiverton and Portsmouth, the tide covered parts of several roads and parking lots. Overall, the flooding was considered minor and there was no structural damage or road washouts.

RIZ001>005 **Northwest Providence - Southeast Providence - Western Kent - Eastern Kent - Bristol**
11 **0400EST** **0** **0** **Heavy Snow**
1200EST

A developing low pressure system south of Long Island spread snow across the entire state. Snowfall totals ranged from about 4 inches along the south coast to 7 inches in the northwest corner of the state. The maximum total was 7.4 inches at North Foster. Some other totals included: Warwick, 7.1 inches; Scituate and Burrillville, 7.0 inches; East Providence, 6.7 inches; Pawtucket, 6.5 inches; Gloucester, Lincoln, and downtown Providence, 6.0 inches. This was a quick-hitting storm system with snowfall rates up to two inches per hour. Most of the snowfall lasted only 6 hours. Since this snow fell on a Saturday morning, there were minimal effects on highway travel, but there were the usual spinouts and minor collisions on the highways.

RIZ007 **Newport**
25 **0617EST** **0** **0** **High Wind (G55)**

A peak wind gust to 63 mph from the south was recorded at 6:17 AM and the tide was reported to be 3.6 feet above normal at the Fox Point Barrier in Providence. There were no reports of significant flooding.

RIZ001>005 **Northwest Providence - Southeast Providence - Western Kent - Eastern Kent - Bristol**
31 **1600EST** **0** **0** **Freezing Drizzle**
2359EST

Light freezing drizzle coated roads with a thin layer of glaze, resulting in treacherous driving conditions. Countless skidding accidents occurred throughout the area. The Jamestown Bridge was closed temporarily. Mostly only minor injuries were reported but one man was killed in Lincoln when the jeep he was driving skidded off Route 99 and rolled down an embankment.